

**February 8, 2016**

## **COUNCIL RULES**

### **2016-2019**

I. The Council President shall preside at Council meetings. The Council shall designate a member as the Presiding Officer Pro-Tem, otherwise known as the Majority Leader. In the absence of the Council President, the Majority Leader shall preside. If both are absent, a Presiding Officer shall be appointed by the Council President from among the Council membership. Should the Council President fail to appoint a Presiding Officer, an acting Presiding Officer shall be selected by the Council from among its own membership. A recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance shall precede the commencement of all Court of Common Council meetings.

Pursuant to Chapter IV, Section 5 of the City Charter, the Council shall meet regularly on the second and fourth Monday of each month at seven o'clock p.m., except that there shall be only (1) regular meeting in each of the months of July and August on the second Monday evening of each of those two months at 7 p.m.

II. A quorum will consist of at least five members of Council who shall be present at the designated meeting location. Provided that a quorum is physically present, additional members of Council may be present by electronic means but will be prohibited from casting a vote.

III. It shall be the responsibility of the Council's Presiding Officer to preserve order and decorum at all meetings and to take such steps as are necessary to maintain order so as to facilitate the procedures of Council business. The Presiding Officer may speak on all questions without thereby losing the right to vote and shall decide questions of order subject to appeal to the Legislative and Legal Advisor or in the absence of the Legislative and Legal Advisor, the designee of the Corporation Counsel.

IV. When any member desires to speak he or she shall raise his or her hand to draw the attention of the Presiding Officer and upon receiving the floor shall confine himself or herself to the question under debate and avoid personalities or imputing improper motives to any member. Speaking time for each member on any main or debatable subordinate motion shall be limited to six (6) minutes with two (2) minutes for rebuttal.

V. The order of business shall be:

- (a) Action on the records of the previous meeting
- (b) Motion to place resolutions on the Consent Calendar
- (c) Communications
- (d) Reports of Committees

(e) Action on agenda items previously presented.

VI. When a motion is made and seconded, it shall be re-stated by the Presiding Officer; and, if it is made in writing, it may be read before being debated. Every motion shall be reduced to writing if the Presiding Officer or any member so desires.

VII. The mover of a question may withdraw his or her motion at any time before a decision or amendment. When a question has been decided, it shall be in order for any member in the prevailing vote to move the reconsideration thereof at the same meeting or at the next succeeding regular meeting. It shall not be in order for a member who abstained on a vote to later move reconsideration pursuant to this rule. No item that has been defeated or postponed indefinitely, nor any item determined by the Presiding Officer to be substantially similar to an item that was previously defeated or postponed indefinitely, shall be introduced within the succeeding six (6) months. A ruling that an item is “substantially similar” within the meaning of this rule may be appealed by the maker to the full body and may be overturned by a majority of those voting

VIII. When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received except a motion to adjourn, to table, to call the previous question, to postpone to a day certain or indefinitely, to commit or to amend. Those several motions shall have precedence in the above order. A motion to adjourn or to recess shall always be in order. A motion to table or postpone or calling for the previous question shall be decided without debate. A motion to table or postpone an ordinance shall be by roll-call vote with the results reported in the Council Journal. A motion to table a resolution will be accepted without roll-call unless there is an objection. Any item that remains on the table for two (2) consecutive meetings shall be deemed to have been postponed indefinitely.

IX. There shall be the following Standing Committees:

1. Labor, Education, Workforce and Youth Development
2. Health and Human Services
3. Operations, Management, Budget, and Government Accountability
4. Planning, Economic Development and Housing
5. Public Works, Parks, Recreation and Environment
6. Quality of Life and Public Safety
7. Legislative Affairs

The Council shall appoint all committees or subcommittees, and no committee or subcommittee created by Council shall have authority to create its own subcommittees or sub-subcommittees. The Council may from time to time appoint special committees for the purpose of holding public

hearings on any matter and for such other purposes as it may designate. A quorum rule of two (2) Council Members is applied to all standing committee, special committee and subcommittee meetings.

The Mayor, City Treasurer and any member of Council who attends a Committee meeting shall have the right to participate in the Committee's discussion, whether or not such official is a member of the Committee. At the discretion of the Committee Chairperson, a Committee may provide opportunity for public participation.

1. A regular Labor, Education, Workforce and Youth Development Committee meeting will be held on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers.

2. A regular Health and Human Services Committee meeting will be held on the first Monday of each month at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.

3. A regular Operations, Management, Budget and Government Accountability Committee meeting will be held on the third Monday of each month at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.

4. A regular Planning, Economic Development and Housing Committee meeting will be held on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers.

5. A regular Public Works, Parks, Recreation and Environment Committee meeting will be held on the first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.

6. A regular Quality of Life and Public Safety Committee meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.

7. A regular Legislative Affairs Committee meeting will be held on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers.

8. Committee of the Whole meetings will take place in accordance with Rule XI.

Committee Chairpersons reserve the right to hold Committee meetings throughout the community with proper notice to the Town and City Clerk's Office and the community.

Committee meetings may be cancelled at the discretion of the Chairperson. A special meeting of a Standing Committee can be called upon no less than 48 hours' notice by the Chairperson filing a written notice of the meeting and the agenda with the Town and City Clerk and mailing a notice to all proper persons. Such Chairperson may not file such a notice until he or she has the approval of at least one other Committee Member, and such Chairperson shall call the meeting on behalf of all those who consented. Should at least three (3) Committee Members request a special meeting, the Chairperson shall file a notice and call a meeting at their request. The agenda of a special meeting shall be posted on the Town Clerk and/or City Council website.

The agenda for each regularly scheduled meeting of a Standing Committee shall be delivered to the Mayor, the Town and City Clerk and all Council Members and shall be posted on the Town Clerk and/or City Council website at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

The agenda shall include all items referred from the previous Council meeting and any item filed by a Committee Member with the Chairperson at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled standing committee meeting.

Any regularly scheduled Standing Committee meeting falling on a legal holiday, or the evening before a holiday, or on an evening when a Council meeting has been scheduled by operation of law shall be rescheduled for the first evening thereafter.

All reports of Committees appointed by the Council shall be in writing. Assistance to each Standing Committee for the purpose of preparing reports shall be provided by Council staff, who shall be supervised by the Town and City Clerk for this and all other administrative purposes. Reports shall include general information on the subject matter, a brief summary of discussion, the proposed action, and the Committee vote (including how each member voted). The report shall be the statement of the Committee chair or of the other Committee member who signs it and shall not require the approval of the Committee.

X. By vote of five (5) Members of Council or with the consent of the Committee Chairperson, a Committee may be discharged from reporting or acting upon an item. Notice of an intention to discharge (by the committee chairperson) or to move to discharge an item from committee shall be filed with the Clerk in accordance with Rule XVI. Upon receipt of such a filing, the Clerk shall conditionally add the referenced item to the agenda for action. An item so discharged may be voted upon by Council.

XI. There shall be a Committee of the Whole comprised of the entire Court of Common Council. The Committee of the Whole shall meet at 6:00 p.m. and end at 7:00 p.m. at the first regularly held Council Meeting of each month for the purpose of taking public comment on issues of interest to the community. No member of the public shall speak for more than three (3) minutes. It is the duty of the Presiding Officer to enforce that time limit in an equitable fashion. During the public comment period, no member of the Council may address the Council as a member of the public.

Any person making personal, impertinent or slanderous remarks or who becomes boisterous while addressing the Council, shall be forthwith barred by the Presiding Officer from further audience at said meeting unless permission to remain is granted by a two-thirds vote of the Council members present and voting.

During the public comment period, there shall be no debate by the Council nor shall Council members ask questions.

Additional meetings of the Committee of the Whole may be called at the discretion of the Council President, or by any five (5) Council Members but with no less than 48 hours' notice

filed with the Town and City Clerk. The Council may invite the Mayor or other city officials at appropriate times to discuss policy matters or other issues needing attention.

In addition, when a nomination has been made by the Mayor for the position of department head, Chief Operating Officer or Corporation Counsel and a resume or other information has been presented to the Council for its consideration, the President of the Council shall convene a Committee of the Whole within fifteen days of the nomination, at which the nominee is invited to appear and be heard. The purpose of the Committee of the Whole will be to provide members of the Court of Common Council the opportunity to ask any questions bearing upon the qualification, experience, or any other information of use in making a decision concerning the appropriateness of the nominee for the position. The Committee of the Whole may then vote either recommending or not recommending the nominee. The nominee will then be presented for confirmation or non-confirmation at a subsequent meeting of the Court of Common Council.

Furthermore, when a nominee has been chosen by the Mayor for a position on any Board or Commission and a resume or other information has been presented to the Council for its consideration, the nominee's name will be presented to the Court of Common Council, which may refer the nominee to the appropriate Council committee for consideration. In the event a nominee is sent to committee for consideration, the nominee will be interviewed according to the practice of that committee and a vote may be taken by the committee either recommending or not recommending the nominee. The nominee shall then be presented for confirmation or non-confirmation at a subsequent meeting of the Court of Common Council.

XII. The Town and City Clerk shall prepare, maintain and have printed an adequate Journal of the proceedings of the Council. The Clerk shall not be required to include speeches.

XIII. The latest published edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall be parliamentary authority in the Council except as otherwise provided in these rules. Interpretation of Council and other rules shall be the responsibility of the Legislative and Legal Advisor, or in the absence of the Legislative and Legal Advisor, the designee of the Corporation Counsel.

XIV. Any of the rules of the Council may be suspended unless three or more members shall object, however the provisions of Rule XIII and Rule XVI may be suspended only by two-thirds consent of all voting members of the Council, provided however that this Rule XIV may be suspended by an affirmative vote of four (4) members of Council, or by any higher number of votes required by the Freedom of Information Act, for the sole purpose of accepting onto the Council agenda an item submitted by Corporation Counsel concerning pending litigation that requires immediate consideration by Council. The Council rules shall be suspended only for the item submitted and shall remain in effect for all other agenda items.

XV. Amendments to these rules shall be submitted in writing at any meeting of the Council, and shall be adopted only by an affirmative vote of at least five (5) members of the Council no later than the second succeeding regular meeting.

XVI. All matters requiring action by the Council shall be placed on the regular agenda if the written document initiating the matter has been filed with The Town and City Clerk on or before twelve o'clock noon on the Wednesday preceding the day of the meeting at which the matter is introduced. If Wednesday is a holiday or if the Clerk's office is closed for any other reason, the deadline will be moved to twelve o'clock noon on the next business day. Only items submitted by the Mayor or a member of the Court of Common Council shall be submitted for the Council meeting. "Emergency" shall be defined, for the purposes of this Rule, as a matter that must be considered by the Council for the immediate preservation of (1) the public peace, health and safety; or (2) the fiscal stability of the City, including the position of the city in litigation matters.

All members of the Council shall be promptly notified by The Town and City Clerk of the nature of any documents filed with the Clerk on or before 4:30 p.m. on the day following the deadline for filing. The Town and City Clerk shall furnish each member of Council, the Mayor, the Corporation Counsel and the Legislative and Legal Advisor, a package containing all agenda backup material. The Town and City Clerk shall simultaneously post an electronic copy of the agenda package on the Town Clerk and/or City Council website.

XVII. At 7 p.m. on the third Monday of each month, or such other times as the Council may from time to time designate, where required, hearings will be held by Council members on all matters requiring a public hearing. If the third Monday falls on a holiday, then said hearings shall be held on the next business day.

The hearings on the third Monday of each month shall be conducted by a Committee of five Council members under an alphabetical assignment with the first-named Council member alphabetically to be Chairperson. In alphabetical sequence, the personnel of the Committee will rotate among all Council members for these hearings.

Public Hearings shall be conducted in accordance with the following procedures:

Each person wishing to address the Council or Committee thereof shall, upon recognition by the Presiding Officer, give his or her name, address, and if he or she represents a group shall, in addition, state for the record, the name and address of said group or organization. Every speaker shall limit his or her remarks to five minutes. It is the duty of the Presiding Officer to enforce that limitation in an equitable fashion

All remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a body and not to any member thereof.

All remarks shall be limited to present or proposed City of Hartford policies, budget, ordinances or resolutions that are designated for such Public Hearing.

During the Public Hearing, no member of the Council may address the Council as a member of the public.

Any person making personal, impertinent or slanderous remarks or who becomes boisterous while addressing the Council, shall be forthwith barred by the Presiding Officer from

further audience at said meeting unless permission to remain is granted by a two-thirds vote of the Council members present and voting.

During the Public Hearing, there shall be no debate by the Council, although questions may be asked by Council of persons making such presentations.

XVIII. Any member of the Council may offer a motion to place resolutions on the general Consent Calendar. Any such motion shall designate those resolutions which the mover believes will not be subject to opposition or debate and which the mover desires to have acted upon on the Consent Calendar. If any Council member shall object to the placing of a resolution or resolutions on the Consent Calendar, then such resolution or resolutions shall not be placed on the Consent Calendar and shall be acted upon in the normal manner.

At any appropriate time, any member of the Council may move for adoption of all resolutions on the Consent Calendar. If such motion has been properly seconded, the Council President shall then direct The Town and City Clerk to take a single roll-call vote in regard to all resolutions on the Consent Calendar. The votes of the members of the Council on the motion for adoption of all resolutions on the Consent Calendar are deemed and shall be construed to be the votes of the members of the Council on each such resolution as if each such resolution had been the subject of a separate roll-call vote, except any member may request The Town and City Clerk to record such member's vote as an abstention on any resolution or resolutions if such member so desires.

Additionally, any resolution or ordinance vetoed by the Mayor shall be automatically placed on the next regularly scheduled Court of Common Council meeting agenda by the Town and City Clerk, introduced by the original sponsor.

Before any proposed ordinance is placed by a member of Council on any agenda for consideration by the Council, such ordinance should be submitted for review and approval as to form and legality by the Legislative and Legal Advisor, who shall consult the Office of the Corporation Counsel as to its view.

XIX. Failure to comply with any provision of these Rules relating to the posting of material on a website shall be reported to the Council, with an explanation for the failure, but shall not require the cancellation or postponement of a meeting if all of the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act have been satisfied.